

who take off when the first shot is fired. We want people who stick around and fight.”

Younger himself has been sticking around for nearly 35 years. Enlisting first in the Active-duty Army, he spent the majority of his time with the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. When he joined the Army Reserve, he served with the 80th Training Division (a Troop Program Unit) in Richmond, VA, and then joined the Individual Ready Reserve. Now, in his capacity as the command sergeant major for OCAR and USARC, he's part of the Active Guard Reserve.

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After spending three-and-a-half decades in combat boots, Younger said he firmly believes in the old adage that the more the Army changes, the more it stays the same.

“Some of the things I saw early in my Army career are now resurfacing—such as, the drawdown,” he said. “The Army is on a rollercoaster—it goes up and down. So, when something new comes along and there's a bunch of changes, it doesn't really strike me as 'new.' This is what I tell my NCO leadership: Make sure you meet the standards, continue to improve and don't worry about the peaks and the valleys in the Army Reserve because they're going to happen. If soldiers are doing the right things, they'll survive.”

Survival of the fittest is an achievable goal for the individual soldier, but what about the Reserve unit facing fewer training dollars as well as fewer soldiers to stand in formation on drill weekends?

“Budget cuts are severe and they will hurt some training,” Younger admitted. “But I don't think they will hurt the training that's necessary.”

According to a Jan. 2 report in *The Army Times*, Reserve units are projected to spend an estimated \$10 billion on training in 1995. Coupled with that, nearly 19,000 Reserve positions are due to be eliminated by the end of the current fiscal year. Long-range, the Pentagon's goal is to cut the Reserve by 40 percent by 1998.

Though the full force of the chopping block is yet to be felt at many units, Younger said now is the time for NCOs to take a second look at their training programs.

“In the past, we've done a lot of training that was nice to know but not necessary for soldiers to perform their jobs,” he said. “That kind of training now has to go out the window. What we do now will have to directly relate to the soldier's military function. We just have to work smarter.”

Younger said he'd like to see more tactical skills added to unit training programs. “Reservists are excellent at their technical jobs, but what they don't always do well is their combat survivability skills. We need to have more NCO leadership that pays attention to CSS and then impresses upon commanders to keep up those skills.

“Overall, I think soldiers are really grasping for the right kind of training in areas they never asked for before,” he added. “They want to be ready if they get called up.”

Another area of concern on the minds of many Reserve NCOs is attendance at Noncommissioned Officers Educa-

tion System (NCOES) schools and, consequently, promotion. With the recent Sergeant Major of the Army review of NCOES which, among 17 other recommendations, eliminates NCOES failures from promotion lists, more NCOs in the Reserve are realizing the importance of PLDC, BNCOC, ANCOC and other leadership courses.

Despite the increasing flood of requests for military schooling, unit training NCOs need to be much more prudent in selecting NCOES candidates, Younger noted.

“We have some soldiers who are going to BNCOC, for instance, and then one month later they're out of the Army,” he said. “We don't need that. We need to train only those soldiers who are going to be around. In this way, I think the drawdown will make better managers out of all of us.

“Though the number of Reserve Component slots for NCOES courses has not increased, the demand for the training has. Previously, a lot of Reserve NCOs had the mindset that they really didn't need NCOES, so they'd lay back and take it easy. But now the light has come on and there's more pressure on them because if they don't go to school they won't get promoted and if they don't get promoted the Retention Control Points will catch up with them and they'll be out. But I say, show us you're the best soldier and you can go. Competition for schools is increasing. This can only make the Reserves better.

Younger leaned forward in his chair again to drive home one last point: “Sure the future's going to be tough, but the good Reservists will hang in there.” ■

Guard Flexes OOTW Muscle

By SSG David Abrams

When 400 soldiers from the Army National Guard hit the sands of the Sinai in January, they were helping to propel America's citizen-soldier force into a future as bright as the Southwest Asia sun, said the Guard's senior enlisted official.

According to CSM Larry Pence, command sergeant major of the Office of the Director, Army National Guard, the ARNG soldiers—who, for the first time, comprised more than 70 percent of the latest Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) rotation in the Sinai—demonstrated just

one of the many ways the Reserve Component is supplementing the Active force in operations other than war (OOTW).

"This sets the pattern for the potential use of this resource in the future," Pence said. "I think we'll see more and more of this type of opportunity come to the National Guard in the days to come. There will be more routine deployments, more call-ups, more missions to places like Haiti and the Sinai."

More activations mean more potential stress for NCOs, but Pence said opportunities like the MFO rotation can only benefit NCOs and their soldiers who volunteered for the year-long assignment to monitor the 1979 peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. Patrolling the desert borders will force NCOs in the Guard to use some technical and tactical skills which might have stagnated over the years.

"They'll have the opportunity to put into practice those things they've learned in PLDC and BNCOOC," Pence said.

"They'll become so much better at those leadership skills because they'll be using them on a day-to-day basis."

The ARNG soldiers came to the Sinai desert from 33 different state units to join 100 Active-duty soldiers and 45 U.S. Army Reservists. All three components then formed the 4th Bn, 505th Parachute Inf Reg, 82nd Airborne Div. After volunteering for the assignment, the Guardsmen were screened and sent to Ft. Bragg, NC, for three months of training before deploying to the Sinai.

The MFO Guardsmen—who include NCOs like an elementary schoolteacher who took a year's sabbatical for the assignment and a linguist from Utah who speaks seven different languages fluently—spend 21 days in the field patrolling the desert and monitoring the border then return to base camp for a respite as another group rotates to the field. Though soldiers at the base camp have the opportunity for such rest-and-relaxation activities as local shopping and scuba diving, some Guardsmen will use the downtime to further their NCO careers.

Pence is particularly excited

by a historic "first" taking place in the Sinai: the chance for ARNG soldiers to attend one of two PLDC classes offered in cooperation with the U.S. Sergeants Major Academy. At the base camp, junior enlisted soldiers who meet the requirements for PLDC gather in temporary classrooms where they are linked to instructors back at USASMA via TNET.

"Just as in any PLDC, our soldiers will use the small group process in the classroom as well as going through a land navigation course and being tested on drill and ceremony," Pence said. "This is a great opportunity for our junior leaders to get their NCOES requirements. At the same time, it gives us a good perspective of the value and capabilities of distance learning by using the TNET uplink with USASMA."

Pence said the MFO assignment is only one example of how the Guard operates all over the world. "I looked at the operations report the other day and noted that we currently have traditional Guardsmen on active duty in 16 countries and seven states," he said.

As the Guard's top enlisted soldier, Pence travels to dozens of states and foreign countries each year, getting feedback from NCOs at local armories.

"They're concerned about how reductions in the Army budget will affect OPTEMPO and how resources will be spread out among the units so they all receive enough training dollars to meet their training requirements," he said. "I hear NCOs saying they need more training opportunities. That's a very sincere concern on their part."

Despite the budgetary threats and personnel reductions, Pence remains optimistic about tomorrow's ARNG. "Our soldiers will continue to demonstrate the desire and capabilities to serve wherever America's Army is required," he said, adding, "There will always be a place for the quality soldier in the Guard."

For NCOs leading squads on patrol through the Sinai desert, that comes as welcome news for a bright future. ■

Abrams is a photojournalist with The NCO Journal.



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